LANGUAGE DEVICES

1. **Vocabulary/word choice:** Are the words simple or fancy? Long/short, simple/complex, many modifiers/few modifiers? Are they technical, flowery, colloquial, formal, cerebral, lively, exciting, vivid, etc? Use of dialect, standard, non-standard English? Does the text or this passage make use of shocking, taboo language? Does the author pile on the details? Does author use slang or jargon specific to the topic? For example, does the writer utilize sports jargon to describe non-sports things, people, events, or places? Or military jargon to describe non-military things, people and/or places? How does the author's word choice contribute to the message?

2. **Point of view:** Who is telling the story? Is the novel or this passage written in first person (I, we, us) or second person (you, your), or third person point of view? If it's third person point of view, is it limited or omniscient? Is the narrator reliable? Does the point of view alternate to impact the way the text is read?

3. **Is there dialogue, monologue, or reported speech?** Dialogue is a conversation between two or more people. It is essential to fiction writing, and some types of nonfiction.

4. **Sentence Structure:** What is distinctive about the sentences in this passage of writing? Are the sentences long or short? Do they contain many subordinate clauses or are they often fragments? Are there any digressions or interruptions? Is the word-order straightforward or unusual? Are the sentences short and punchy?

5. **Figures of speech:** Are there any metaphors, similes, analogies, hyperbole, understatement, personification and/or symbols? Any other use of figurative language? Use of sensory details through imagery?

6. **Flashbacks:** Does the author use flashbacks? A flashback is an interruption to the narrative that presents an earlier episode. Flashbacks move a story back in time giving readers insights about characters they don't know well. Used effectively, flashbacks enhance the emotional movement of a story, deepen the story's imagery, and organize a story by weaving information into the narrative at critical times.

7. **Structure:** What's interesting about how the author constructs the literary work? Are there flashbacks (see above), flash forwards, literary montage, vignettes, journals? Is the work chronological? What specific form is used in structuring the narrative? How does this form

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impact the way one reads the work? Does it contribute to the overall meaning or message of the work? Definition for **montage**: "a literary, musical, or artistic composite of juxtaposed more or less heterogeneous elements."

8. **Characters:** A character is what he does. How does the author characterize the people in his novel? Characterization is the presentation of character, whether by direct description, by showing the character in action, or by the presentation of other characters that help define each other.

9. **Allusions:** How often and how does the author refer to other texts, myths, symbols, famous figures, historical events, quotations, and so on?

10. **Sound devices:** Use of alliteration, onomatopoeia, rhythm, rhyme, and/or repetition?

11. **Does the writer use any of the following:** Puns, euphemisms, archaic language, affixation, ambiguity, idiom, clichés, stream of consciousness, phonological features, foreign words, nonsense words, anecdotes, didactic, satire, vernacular, sarcasm, disclaimers, footnotes...?

12. **Paragraph structure:** Are the paragraphs very short, or are there enormous blocks running across many pages? Are the paragraphs indented or flush left?

13. **Irony:** Is there a use of irony? In **situational irony**, expectations aroused by a situation are reversed; in **cosmic irony** or **the irony of fate**, misfortune is the result of fate, chance, or God; in **dramatic irony**, the audience knows more than the characters in the play/film, so that words and action have additional meaning for the audience.

14. **Rhetorical strategies:** Has the rhetor appealed to pathos and/or logos? In what way has the rhetor established his or her ethos? Is there a rhetorical use of humor? An appeal to an authority? The use of a logical fallacy?

15. **Tone (the writer's implied relationship to the reader and the subject matter):** What is the author's attitude? Does the author seem sarcastic? Remorseful? Fearful? Condescending? Praising? Critical/satirical? Wistful? Pessimistic? Academic? Philosophically detached? Hopeful? Bitter? Sad? Intimate/distant? Angry/calm? Informative/entertaining? Humorous/serious? Ironic/literal? Passionately involved/aloof? Is the tone consistent or does it shift? What feeling is evoked in the reader by the language used by the author? What type of tone shifts exist that impact meaning?

16. **Most Importantly, how do all of these elements create meaning? What does the passage mean and how does it contribute to the meaning of the piece of writing?**

Source: https://fullcoll.instructure.com/courses/12487/pages/style-and-language-analysis-guide

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